

We are pleased to continue this feature that invites readers to share ideas and stories with other readers. To receive the questions, sign up at <http://www2.ptsem.edu/alumni/change.htm>. Thanks to those who sent us both serious and lighthearted answers to this issue's question!

If you could make one addition to the course catalog at PTS, what course would you offer, and why?

A course in which soon-to-be-pastors could discuss practical aspects of ministry with seasoned clergy. Some of the most productive and memorable classes I took were preaching classes with Bryant Kirkland and Ernest Campbell, not only because of their influence on my preaching, but for the pastoral wisdom I gleaned from the conversations in those classes on many subjects.

Rick Cosnotti, (M.Div., 1976) Boston, Massachusetts



Calling 101: "What Exactly Did the Voice Sound Like?"

This course will be required for all junior preministerial (M.Div.) students. The purpose is to examine exhaustively the nature of one's calling to ministry. It will weed out the ministerial candidates that have a messianic complex. Such students will be isolated until only one student is recognized as the true Lord and Savior. This group will then be provided the necessary assistance to form their own cult. Those truly hearing a voice (or voices) calling them into ministry will be referred to appropriate psychiatric care. The remaining juniors will continue the course, which will follow a "boot camp" approach to test the fortitude of one's calling to ministry. The approximate retention rate of students in this class will be 10 percent: those too idealistic to know any better and the "damn them to hell" diehards. Such remaining candidates will be perfectly ineffectual pastors and thus well suited for parish ministry.

Patrick Walker, (M.Div., 1986) York, Pennsylvania



Practical Ministry 101: "Finding God in the Drains"

This course would orient future pastors to the ongoing work of incarnational ministry (i.e., working in old buildings with limited funds and aging volunteers!). Topics include changing the toner in a photocopier, manipulating the postage machine, jump-starting the furnace, sermon improvisation when a pipe organ reed sticks, basic plumbing (especially as relates to the mysteries of the Ladies' Room), and basic electrical work (how to work with fuses and breakers when the computer in which your sermon is saved has just blown the power). Advanced credit given for individual study with plaster, tile, caulking, and roofing.

John Beddingfield, (M.Div., 1991) New York, New York



I would have enjoyed a class offering a theological, historical, and practical approach to Christian spirituality. An overview would have helped me in both my own spirituality and in my academic understanding of this field.

Todd Bouldin, (M.Div., 1994) Camarillo, California



Wedding Rehearsals 301—An advanced class for those willing to wade into the ocean of working with self-absorbed brides, controlling mothers, step-families, drunk groomsmen, and soloists singing to pretaped music. Will include relaxation skills so that you can fully accept that you are not in control, or even really that important.

Susan Rowland Miller, (M.Div., 1993) Perrysburg, Ohio



I would love to see Princeton offer a course in "Ministry and Nonprofit Management." Many ministers serve in nonprofit organizations, both as staff and as board members. Federal and state regulations, reporting and disclosure, ownership and control, strategic planning, grant writing, fundraising, grants management, evaluation and accountability, and even partnerships and collaborations are areas that could be covered. Such a course would be valuable for anyone called to serve in leadership roles in his or her community by serving on nonprofit boards.

Melissa L. Kelley, (M.Div., 1995) Denver, Colorado



A class titled "Not in Our Homes" would address the issue of clergy abuse of power, including such concerns as infidelity and boundaries.

It could explore why clergy misuse their power and how it affects them, their families, and the individuals who have been abused. How might we be aware of the temptations that get us in that situation? Where do clergy go for help when it happens in their family? How do we help the children in all of this? How can affairs be addictive, as are drug and alcohol abuse?

Alumna, Class of 1980



When I was a student, I was discouraged that Princeton offered few of the "off-campus" courses offered by other seminaries. Certainly, some students did summertime digging in the Holy Land, and there was an occasional trip to India, but there were no "mission trips" between semesters, nor hardly any short courses over winter break.

George R. Pasley, (M.Div., 1997) Garnett, Kansas



PTS should have a class on solving conflicts. I teach kids how to solve problems peacefully. We cover everything from expressing feelings and stating needs, to learning negotiating skills. Kids need to learn curiosity and respect. Tolerance says, "I am better than you, so I will put up with you. Let me teach you." Respect says, "We are equals; what can I learn from you?" Respect would solve many of the problems in our church and world. Sadly, what I learned about solving problems, I learned outside of church and school!

Karen Wanjico, (M.Div., 1999) Casa Grande, Arizona



A course called "Single Women, Solo Pastors—What Were You Thinking?"

It would address the practical issues that single women should explore as they look at their first pastoral assignments. After preaching up a sweat, did you remember a change of clothes or a coat to protect you from the night air? Who do you share the experience of that uplifting "preach" with when it's over? Is there food in the fridge at home, or clean clothes in the closet? Who can you hug? Who can you date? And where is YOUR dinner?

Rhonda Y. Britton, (M.Div., 2002) New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Canada